

UPSC Civil Services Examination

Political Science & International Relations

Topic: Overseas Citizenship of India

The Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) Scheme was introduced by amending the Citizenship Act, 1955 in August 2005 in response to demands for dual citizenship by the Indian diaspora, particularly in developed countries. It was launched during the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention at Hyderabad in 2006.

An Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) is a person who is technically a citizen of another country having an Indian origin. They were citizens of India on 26th January 1950 or thereafter except who is or had been a citizen of Pakistan, Bangladesh or such other country.

Multi-purpose and life-long visa are provided to the registered Overseas Citizen of India for visiting India and are also exempted from registration with Foreign Regional Registration Officer or Foreign Registration Officer for any length of stay in India.

What is an OCI card?

Launched in 2005, under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the OCI card was introduced for fulfilling the demands for dual citizenship among the Indians living in different developed countries. The OCI card provides Overseas Citizenship of India to live and work in India for an indefinite period of time but does not provide the right to vote, hold constitutional offices or buy agricultural properties.

Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Card: Eligibility

A person must meet the following eligibility criteria before applying for the OCI scheme:

- He/She is a citizen of another country having an Indian origin. He/She was a citizen of India on or before the commencement of the constitution; or
- He/She is a citizen of another country, but was eligible for the citizenship of India at the time of the commencement of the constitution; or
- He/She is a citizen of another country and belonging to a territory that became a part of India after the 15th August 1947; or
- He/She is a child/grandchild/great grandchild of such a citizen; or
- He/She is a minor child, whose parents are both Indian citizens or one parent is a citizen of India and
- is a spouse of foreign origin of an Indian citizen or of an OCI cardholder

Any person having citizenship of Bangladesh or Pakistan is not eligible to apply for the OCI card. Even a person having a background of serving any foreign military are also not eligible for the scheme.

OCI: Conferment of Rights

The registered Overseas Citizens of India are not entitled to several rights that are conferred on a citizen of India.

1. Right to equality of opportunity under article 16 of the Constitution with regard to public employment.
2. Right for election as President and Vice-President under article 58 and article 66 respectively.
3. They are not entitled to the rights under article 124 and article 217 of the Constitution.

4. Right to register as a voter under section 16 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950(43 of 1950).
5. Rights with regard to the eligibility for being a member of the State Council/Legislative Assembly/Legislative Council.
6. For an appointment to the posts of Public Services and Union Affairs of any State.

